

DEATH VALLEY

DRIVER

VIDEO
REVIEW

154



WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #154!

[COVER BY YOUNG DEAN RASMUSSEN.]

The network of dvds is falling into place. More wrestling, more reviews, more of the love. Love me. Here, love me....

CONSEIL MONDIAL de LUCHA LIBRE- 10/22/1989
[DEAN RASMUSSEN]

Vicky Carranza vs Rosy Moreno- Hair vs Hair: Rosy Moreno is fucking awesome. She looks like somebody's great aunt, a great aunt that gone all hateful and evil- like the way old women at the slot machines at Atlantic City look like a sunday school class gone satanically wrong. Vicky Carranza looks like she was quite beautiful once but has slowly gone to seed- a beautiful bloom that is now off the rose... Vicky's new role in the Lucha Libre is to get punched in the face by Rosy Moreno and sell the kicks to the stomach- and there is no way she dreamed of that as a child thinking of her life in the future. Rosy's estrogen-drenched hatred carries the whole match because- though Vicky does a toprope crossbody and headscissors, it really is all about the hate that Rosy brings to the match. Rosy misses punching Vicky in the face and loses the first caida to a roll-up. Rosy starts the second caida by stalling and then kips up and around Vicky- a shadow of her lost punky youth- before taking a big bump to the floor. Rosy comes backs in and does the awesome punches to the knee joint and then really starts crushing Vicky's knee, using every move that Ric Flair uses to crush a knee before the submission is applied, but looking all vicious like when Bret Hart would work the knee. Vicky rolls to the floor and sells it like a queen, so Rosy follows her to the floor and drives Vicky's knee in the concrete in a beautifully bitchy moment of the Grand Lucha Libre. Rosy takes her into the ring and goes back to punching her in the knee- adding in a few truly fucking boss Harley Race headbutts and some fucking AWESOME slugs to the face. Vicky finally fires back with some punches to the stomach to start her comeback and Vicky makes with the dropkicks. Rosy cuts her off by punching her in the face and hitting the Butterfly Suplex to take the second caida. Rosy drives her shin into Vicky's throat while pinning her and you say. To yourself. "Nice touch. You Rosy Moreno. You. You truly are the bitchiest Mexican woman of 1989." The third caida starts with a knuckle lock sequence and Vicky gets a Boston Crab on Rosy, but Rosy fights out and here is where you would assume the true assbeat would kick in- hair versus hair, third caida, Mexico and all. Instead it's Vicky with the submissions and Rosy fighting out. Vicky with the suplex and senton for the two count. Rosy does bring the urgency by punching Vicky in the stomach between nearfalls. Rosy goes up top with a toprope inring plancha for two! and this quickly degenerates into an endless Festival Celebrating The Endless Sequence Of Nearfalls! until Rosy hits a Superplex and TOMBSTONE?!?! CONTROVERSIAL! For the win! They shave Vicky's head, dangling from her broken neck. Rosy should have beaten Vicky into a better third caida because- really- violence is better than nearfalls, no matter what the decade. And I assume the fact that Vicky wasn't stretchered out was because she was sold into slavery in Bolivia immediately after the match because she wasn't selling a piledriver like it a

nailbomb that went off in her singlet but was standing erect to have her head shaven ON THE SAME DAY as getting a piledriver. Eh.

Chavo Guerrero/ Cien Caras/ Mascara Ano Dos Mil vs Lizmark/ El Satanico/ Rayo De Jalisco Jr.: God, this kinda goes on for a while. Cien Caras had a cool fuckin mask. Chavo and El Satanico take it to the mat and it rules but it doesn't make up for the rest of the listless brawling. Though watching El Satanico go all Snakepit on the joints of Chavo is pretty fucking great. Satanico does the cool ass thing of getting an armbar and holding the armbar all the way to the floor and up the aisle. Then Chavo tags out and you remember who much Rayo de Jalisco sucks it. Lizmark opts to save his knees for another match and phones in a plancha. And it all sucks after the first two minutes.

Jerry "El Puma" Estrada vs Javier "El Monarca" Cruz - Hair vs Hair: Schneider sent me this dvd and he sold me on this match thusly:

- There is the Chigusa-Dump scale for bleeding in Joshi. There is the Muta-Hase scale in Puroresu. And there is the Cruz-Estrada scale in Lucha. This isn't that match. That was the OTHER Cruz-Estrada bloodbath from 1989.

- Jerry Estrada is coked out of his MIND. He can't run the ropes in the first caida.

- Javier Cruz is the secret great worker of Lucha Libre.

Well, this is the third Javier Cruz match I've seen and the second Cruz hair versus hair match I've seen so I know he is a fuckin machine and I knew that from the Cruz/Ciclon Ramirez hair versus hair match. That match was also the first match where I realized that the slathering over the collective dick of AAA in the mid-90s kept folks from getting me tapes to see the real deal that was going down in EMLL at that time. Estrada actually does okay until about two minutes in and then it all goes to hell for him. He then takes a bump to the floor and takes the full brunt of a Cruz toprope plancha to the floor and coked up Jerry is FRESH AS A DAISY! It was like the Macho Man's Reviving Elbow or maybe a syringe of adrenaline into Estrada's heart. By the second caida, Estrada is blowing plasma out of his head and is punching more and stumbling less. Jerry kicks Cruz all over the floor and posts him so we have everybody spraying blood everywhere- with the beautiful part of Jerry kicking Cruz right in the face for like five minutes to get the blood pouring out of his head and then licking the blood off Cruz's face. Cruz is GODLIKE making a headbutt look he was shot in the head- and then wrestles for two as Jerry Estrada kinda randomly throws Cruz around into the turnbuckles. Estrada can barely make the toprope without killing himself to hit the toprope senton- hitting Cruz with all of his weight in a flying drugged-up frenzy of Lucha fucked up stupidity- to take the second caida. Third caida is on the floor and Jerry Estrada is coked up, incoherent and BLADING! A ribbon of blood streams down his chest and stomach and it looks really cool as he powerbombs Cruz and goes straight into Boston Crab. Cruz is coated in blood but escapes, CRUSHING fucking CRUSHING Estrada with a tope, Estrada flying into the fourth row like a complete drugged up psycho who doesn't realize until tomorrow morning that half the skin on his back has been scraped by the armrest of a fixed chair in the third row. Cruz takes a dropkick and takes a just completely FUCKED UP no hands bump to the floor through the second and third ropes and Estrada piscados on top for the full effect. Cruz goes back on offence and dropkicks Estrada to the floor and hits a FUCKING GREAT SASUKE SKULL-FRACTURING RYDER KICK!! WHAT

THE FUCK!?!? They get back into the ring and slog through some roll-ups and Cruz goes up top and misses a Toprope Senton but still procures the Mexican Ceiling Hold until it falls apart. Jerry Estrada bodyslams Cruz and is going up top but misses a step on the apron and goes facefirst into the post. Cruz runs off the apron and dropkicks Estrada on the floor. Estrada misses a senton but gets the submission by whipping out a flash [that submission that Damien stole when he went to WCW] and it's off to 1989 Spanish language cartoons about Jesus. This match has a vicariousness that you only get Jerry Estrada. How is THIS motherfucker still alive? Postmatch, Jerry Estrada is a fucking bloody mess but he is holding Xavier Cruz's hair and waving it at the fans. Overall, Cruz is fucking AWESOME in this. Estrada is as psychotic as he usually is PLUS he seems to be completely numb from whatever he is on- thus you have a bump freak going beyond the call of duty. Mexico is foreign country.

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!@!@!@!@ PHIL SCHNEIDER'S ON-GOING TOP 20 of 2006

So I decided to embark on a little project. I watch a fair amount of wrestling, and when the end of the year comes, I always kind of forget what I thought was really great. So I am going to be doing an ongoing 2006 MOTY list here in the DVDVR. Since it is only February and I haven't seen any 2006 lucha, Japanese stuff (except the NJ dome show) or indies on tape. I am going to start with a top 5 (well I was going to start with a top 5, but slack ass Dean delayed this thing long enough for me to watch Finlay v. Benoit and Joe v. Necro, so now it is 7 throwing off the whole symmatry of the thing), eventually moving up to a top 20, where it will stay steady. Anytime a match gets added to the list, I will bang out a review.

1. Rey Mysterio v. Mark Henry WWE 1/15: There has been a fair amount of internet caterwalling about the recent Henry pimping by folks on this here website. Of course I am old school here is a quote from the 11/3/03 RAW Workrate Report:

"PAS: Mark Henry is the best worker on this brand as he bumps around enough to carry useless Shawn Micheals. I really liked the Bearhug into a bridge pin, I also dug how the match was layed out, with Micheals getting dominated and hitting the superkick like a fluke right hand in a boxing fight. "

So whatever you think of the opinion, I ain't new to the party. This match here was the best of Mark Henry's career. It really worked to his strengths, which is his selling and athleticism. He is a 400 pound man who can dunk a basketball, and he really uses that explosion well. There is a section where Rey has the advantage and Henry just bursts off the floor with a clothesline, with as much speed as Rey. The backwards roll out of the pin into the powerslam was awesome as well. Henry is great at vulnerable monster selling, he makes you buy both his invulnerability and his vulnerability at the same time. It was something that Vader and Aja Kong were amazing at, something that Samoa Joe is great at, and something that Henry does really well here. He bumps and reacts really nicely without overbumping or overselling for his size, like the way guys

like Paul Birchell or Abyss do. It makes no sense for Henry to be pinballing for a guy a third of his size, but Rey is always in the match, and seems to consistently be one big move away.

Rey Mysterio is the best wrestler in the world right now, he has adjusted his style so he can now really work as a main event wrestler. The stuff he was doing in the mid-90's wouldn't fly on the top of the card anywhere, Japan, Mexico or the U.S., but the injuries have made him adjust and slow down and now he really is the best at working the pace of a main event match. I could see him working El Dandy for a Middleweight title now, where 10 years ago Dandy would have to really reign him in. He was amazing here, as he used his speed and also wasn't afraid to lay in some stiff strikes. People shit on the 619, but I think Rey has enough nifty variations to make it work; the 619's to the back here was great, and Rey has really developed some credible offense, even against a monster like Henry.

2. Samoa Joe v. Necro Butcher IWA-MS 1/12: The first match between these two was just a total spectacle, insanely hot crowd and the whole thing was worked at a 90's AJW pace. This was a different type of match, just as stiff, but more of an actual wrestling match. I could see why people were disappointed, but I think this is the way the feud had to evolve. You slow it down, run it without blood (this is a pretty good counter to all the idiots who say Necro can't wrestle without bleeding) , and then heat it up again for a rematch.

Necro comes out a lot stronger here- there was no point in this match where he looked below Samoa Joe's level. They worked this match really even, which was very different from the dynamic of match one. Necro even lands the first big shot, as after an in ring strike exchange, he knocks Joe out of the ring with a nasty left hook. They kind of work a counter strategy with Necro- as he counters the ole kick by chucking a chair into Joe's ankle and slips out the back of Joe's first muscle buster attempt. Joe does some pretty nasty work on Necro's right hand, including several chair shots, which keeps Necro from throwing in the later part of the match. There is a really great Arturo Gattish moment, where Necro is throwing body shots and double clutches the right hand, before gritting his teeth and throwing it finally. I didn't hate the Chris Hero interference as much as a lot of people did; he grabbed Necro's leg when Necro almost had Joe out with the Asiatic Spike, but I did think that it wasn't good booking to use such an anticipated match to lead to a less anticipated one. If you are going to have the finale of Steamboat v. Flair lead to something, it had better be Flair v. Funk. Flair v. Jimmy Garvin doesn't work.

Got to give it up to Joe here too, as he did an amazing job here, as you really bought Necro working up to his level, and his selling on the Asiatic Spike was amazing. He was also showing some incredible hand speed on his punches, which something you don't see mentioned alot, he looked like the world's most Samoan Sweet Pea Whitaker when he was working over Necro in the corner. I think if they work a third match, you could mix the two matches together and have a longer more epic third encounter. Let's hope for all the Paypal accounts to remain unhacked.

3. Juventud v. Kid Kash WWE 1/3: Ahh Juventud, it was a nice little run. Honestly Juvi lasted much longer than I thought he would, as I assumed two weeks in he would steal drugs out of Vince's office, or get caught blowing Sylvain by Patterson. This match was a nice caper to Juvi's career, honestly with the bridges he has burned, who knows where he will show up again. Kid Kash is a guy who I absolutely could not stand in TNA, but has gotten a really fun WWE formula match going. He basically picks a body part, does some really nasty, almost Andersonish work on it, and then either moonsaults for the win, or uses a mistake to hit his brainbuster. It is unclear how self-aware Juvi is, but this match really felt like a swan song, as he really goes all out here, including a huge tope con hilo from the top to the floor, and just awesome knee selling, as it really feels almost Teddy Hartish, like he was faking a legit injury. Lots of nifty counter stuff here too, and was really worked at quite a pace. I guess I will have to start buying AAA tapes again.

4. Finlay v. Chris Benoit WWE 1/30: Every part of this recent Finlay run has just made me giddy. From the first promo, to his three awesome competitive squashes, to just the chance of seeing him back in against one of his great former foes in Benoit. It isn't anything I ever expected to see again, and I am loving every bit of it. This wasn't an epic match, but it was Benoit v. Finlay pounding the ever loving crap out of each other, right there on the TV set. Really toe to toe, the way the early rounds of great boxing match is. Neither guy had really long runs without the other guy just firing back. In a promotion full of people who can't throw elbow drops, Finlay's are just gorgeous. The ring apron elbow, which is a spot a lot of guys use now, was at another level here. This went a decent amount of time for a TV match, but it did feel a little truncated, in a way that the Regal v. Benoit SD match didn't. I am just hoping that it was the first of several matches. Booker really put over Finlay on commentary, and this program is close to perfection. Just throw in a freed up Regal and we have all I need in wrestling.

5. Samoa Joe v. BJ Whitmer ROH 1/14: I don't care for B.J. Whitmer, and was pretty bummed when this match was announced for the ROH show, but Joe is so good right now, that it doesn't really matter who he is in there with. Whitmer really only brings one thing to the table, a willingness to take and give some shots (that and long luxurious flowing hair, seriously he looked like Crystal Gale.) Joe can work with that, and this was a nasty little fight. One thing that is sort of overlooked when people talk about the greatness of Joe is his ability to bump. He took some suplexes right on his head here, really making Whitmer's exploder, which is normally a throwaway spot, look totally deadly. The KO finish was really great too, with Joe snapping a kicking Whitmer super hard in the head, and the ref jumping in to stop it before Whitmer took more punishment. One of the better fake MMA finishes I have seen. I doubt by the end of the year this will even make a list of the top 20 Joe matches of 2006, but for the early part of 2006 it makes it.

6. Chris Benoit v. Randy Orton WWE 1/24: I really dug all three of these matches, but I think the no-holds barred one is the best. Man, after being stuck on RAW for so long, you kind of forgot how awesome Chris Benoit was. He comes to Smackdown and reminds you. This was the best match Orton has ever had. It starts with some really nice in ring matwork and exchanges. Orton is kind of awkward on the mat and the awkwardness works really well in the context of these

matches- it isn't smooth like alot of indy matwork or even RINGS matwork is, it comes off as more of a ragged fight for position. There is a section early where Benoit goes for a German and Orton desperately fights to lock the leg. After the in-ring section it breaks into a fight and Benoit will beat your ass, and Orton isn't afraid to stand in and absorb it. The diving headbutt into the trash can lid was pretty nasty, as was Benoit ripping at Orton's arm to set up the crossface. Nothing career threatening, but nasty enough to have the stip work.

7. A.J. Styles v. Matt Sydal ROH 1/14: Spotfest junior wrestling is one of my least favorite styles. I am so over the point where I want to watch tiny shaved chest MTV Road Rules looking guys exchange meaningless flashy spots. I am with SUWA- fuck social dance wrestling. With that caveat this was a pretty damn impressive social dance. I don't care for Styles but he will bring some violence to the fanciness, and he beats on Sydal here pretty good.

I don't really like Styles, but he is always been pretty good at working top guy with flashy underdog. I remember a Styles v. Jardi Franz match at the APW King of the Indies, that was worked really similar to this. Styles is a weird guy who can work top guy decently, and work underdog well, but is awful working even matches.

They have a little story here too, as Styles kills Sydal's neck, and Sydal is playing the underdog who knows every move the favorite is going to make. The actual spots were crazy and beautiful and fancy and fast and executed perfectly. This felt like if it were in front of a third as many people, and had three more syncopated chants (you needed one "Match of the Year" and two "This is Awesome"s) Meltzer would have given it *****.

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\$%\$%\$%\$%\$% U-STYLE- 11/23/2005
[DEAN RASMUSSEN]

Oh sweet U-Style, how I love thee. Schneider sent me this because he feels sorry for/loves me. This dvd is fucking sweet.

Katsuhisa Fujii vs Kyosuke Sasaki: Fujii has hair that looks like he just took off a football helmet- and YET it is better hair than Sasaki. Sasaki has the hair that looks like it was based on the path of a Ouija board pointer that was spelling out a particularly long name of a ghost. The match itself was based on Fujii beating the living dogshit out of Sasaki by suplexing him onto his head a whole lot. I love the BattlARTS concept of the released suplex as a knockout. THUS, I liked this little match. Because Fujii fucking slaughters Sasaki with a couple of suplexes.

Wataru Sakata vs Hiroyuki Ito: Ito is awesome. Schneider reminded me of his matches that I had seen in other U-Style matches and he truly is quite the Fuerza Guerrera of shootstyle. Tom and Schneider say this is a lesser Ito match but I think it's pretty fucking fabulous. It's based on Sakata and Ito taking turns punching each other in the stomachs in the middle of leglocks- all the while convey sheer hatred on their faces. That's what good professional wrestlers do- convey hatred with facial expressions and body movements while contorting into an odd

physical entanglement. That is why there is no ceiling to the styles that pro wrestling can achieve. If you can convey pain and violence and hatred and desperation, it doesn't really matter the style, the (lack of) a ring, the rules, the audience, the angle, the anything. Ito is just as good at conveying this as Bruiser Bob Sweetan was in 1983. And that makes a shootstyle match in 2006 as fun as a Southern Pro Style match in 1983. Schneider and Tom were saying that this is a lesser match because it was going against type by having basically a flash submission when the Ito strongsuit is the RINGS Scoring Assisted nearfall finishes. I thought it was a good match to get me back into the U-Style so I took what I could get. Yes, I took what I could get.

Luis Azeredo/ Yasuhito Namekawa vs Hidehisa Matsuda/ Kazuki Okubo: This is a fun little match. Namekawa is intense and humble and fights hard. Luis Azeredo is from ChuteBox and every time he gets in the ring, his first move is a single leg dropkick. I was talking to TomK as I watched this the first time and I'm convinced that the WWE should sign the little guy and conquer Brazil with Azeredo like he conquered Latino America with Eddy and Rey Rey. He's all fast and fun. Matsuda and Okubo are thin Japanese guys in tiny pants. They wrestle a shootstyle of pro wrestling.

James Thompson vs Ricardo Morais: How does one speak of this match? When I had the conversation with Tom about the WWE using Luis Azeredo to take over Brazil, he cynically mentioned that the only guys Vince would be interested in would be these two guys. Both are 6'7ish and are CUT! RIPPED! BOLO!! And they... God... I don't know where to start. I'll have to use fights from our shared mutual experience- you the gentle beloved reader and I, your humble writing servant. It starts off like Andre Rison and Deion Sanders decided to reenact their famous on-field BRAWL- but this time not as stiff and this time they are wearing those giant inflatable novelty sumo wrestler suits that they use on Titties Night at Hooters during the Final Four. And they smack each other gently- like lovers who want to feel naughty but not actually inflict any pain- sweet gentle slaps of passion and love. "Yeah, Ricardo, -smek- you are my man angel. -smek- But you a naughty man angel. -smek- You been bad." Then it kinda transitions into that scene from Napoleon Dynamite where Kip shows Napoleon his cage fighting skills- but after each character has cycled through 6 cycles of a Rex Kwan Doh ICopro knockoff. But there is never a moment of heat like when Napoleon suckersmacks Kip. Just gentle, loving smacks and tender, nudging "kicks". By ten minutes or so, the ref is audibly saying, "END IT NOW!!" like I would yell years ago at the endless death scene in CYRANO- where Gerard Depardieu goes for the Palme d'Or by hanging on for fifteen minutes and ruining any goodwill ever mustered by the cinematic atrocity. By 11 minutes, it's kinda like the TV series M*A*S*H after ten seasons- when everybody had seventies hair and all the stories were about Kluger who hadn't worn a dress in three seasons and you had to watch it because they didn't have cable in your area yet and it was mom's favorite show and you just wanted the show to fucking end- because fucking FRANK BURNS wasn't even on the show. And Hotlips (who I will admit to thinking about when I was 13 while comically pleasuring myself until confused and shameful teenage loads spewed forth) wasn't even hot anymore. By the 12 minute, it's like you're writing a review about a really shitty shootstyle match between two stiffs and you just want to curl up in a ball and really concentrate on your self-loathing about forcing yourself to endure this. And

then it goes another minute. Vince's heart is going to explode when he sees these guys. BIG! (God, you won't want to live.)

Frank Shamrock vs Daisuke Nakamura: Hey, I remember Frank Shamrock as the King Of Pancrase in what were prolly non-fixed fights. U-Style is fixed as all get-out so at least we know where the bread is buttered here. Nakamura I should be familiar with but I got four kids and I'm addicted to the Red Green tapes Doug Corti sends and then Doug sends the Corner Gas tapes and I got to perfect my drinking problem and my old guy cover band is about to start up a Styx/Buzzcocks practice schedule for some gig we got and I just can't go around memorizing and remember everything. Hell, my wife has a birthday coming up and I'm turning FORTY in April so I gotta clear out as much room as possible. Nakamura is sullen and melancholy. Frank doesn't have the abs he useta have. But then again. Who DOES? And he does look less chimplike- though not sure how you pull that off. Shamrock is AWESOME with the stylized quasi-lucha matwork- in that I love the headspinning off the stomach into a side mount. Yes, I do love that. Shamrock could be shooting for a Volk Han Goes Italiano thingy but his kneelocks aren't old school carney enough. Nakamura punches Shamrock's stomach like Nakamura is a complete pussy and makes you wonder if Ito and Sakata will take him to the side and talk to him and call him a fucking pansy and pull his tiny trunks up deeply into his buttcheeks and then give him a titty twister or something. It sucked. Shamrock sinks in a front choke for a ropebreak. They go into double carney kneebars and you know it's quality shootstyle because it looks like two horseshoe crabs mating. Nakamura fights out of some submissions and Shamrock is making me want to see a Shamrock/Carl Malenko best of seven. Shamrock quits toying with Nakamura and finishes him off and my curiosity about shootstyle Frank Shamrock is piqued for the future.

Toshiaki Kawada vs Mikhail Illoukhine: Schneider said that this match will convince me that Kawada shouldn't have been wasting his time in the 90s with the Big Four and should have been having 5 star matches with Yamazaki in UWFi. I remember the Kawada matches with the late Gary Albright and I could see it. Kawada sells the first kneebars like he's always WANTED to sell a kneebars- like a kneebars as opposed to the All Japan first ten minutes of comical matwork kneebars. Then the striking starts and Kawada gets carded for using the point of the elbow- and this leads Illoukhine to do the shootstyle version of an Angel Azteca armdrag sequence by throwing Kawada all over the mat with wristlocks. Mikhail sinks in a kneebars and Kawada is down three points with the rope break. Kawada does the AWWWWWESOME deadweight Dangerous Backdrop that he rolls into a fucking NASTY looking WAR Special for the tapout. Kawada makes Illoukhine look godlike before whipping out the King's Road style and crushing the Russian shooter's skull with the POWER OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING! It RULES. Oh yeah, Kawada+Shootstyle= My wrestling pecker fully erect.

Kiyoshi Tamura vs Josh Barnett: Barnett is fun slowly and dramatically working to the cross armbreaker and all- but this match lacked the speed and beauty of a higher end Tamura match- as Barnett is waay more shoot than shootstyle. Tamura does carry him through some sections, selling the submissions and getting in the right place for the ropebreaks, but Tamura is never a cobra striking in the beginning like you want him to be- as they are actually working a more All

japan 90s match than the one before this- in that the mat work is killing time before the beatings and suplexes. Tamura does hit a fucking sweet knee to the forehead for a knockdown and then Barnett explodes with two giant suplexes for a knockdown and it really turns into quite the fun match. They spin out of wrist submissions and take it back to the mat and we await the assbeating to kick back in. Tamura mirrors Barnett long developing cross armbreaker for a ropebreak and they stand up and they just start kicking the shit out of each other and it fucking rules. Barnett is quite the Rocky Johnson of U-Style, in that he does a flurry of high spots and then does a little too many restholds in-between. But he is furious when he is kicking the hell out of Tamura so it makes it worthwhile. Tamura gets another ropebreak from a kneebar and that is the signal for Barnett to fucking DESTROY Tamura with a Capture Suplex for an 8 count. Barnett tries to hit another and Tamura does the Rey Rey Toprope Black Tigerdriver reversal into a Cross Armbreaker and Barnett taps. Tamura is masterful in laying the match out and when it kicks in it's actually pretty fucking spectacular and violent. That's quality shootstyle. U-Style fucking rules.

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MID-ATLANTIC SQUASHES [SKEETER BRAWLEY]

"Are you as good a businessman as your brother? Do you cancel your checks too?" -- Tully Blanchard to David Crockett, sometime in 1987 on Crockett programming.

IVAN KOLOFF V ROCKY KING: The classic competitive squash, with Rocky getting in a fair bit of offense, even though it was the generic babyface dropkick/body slam moveset. Rocky got two separate bouts of offense before going down to a Russian sickle. Nikita, seconding Ivan, comes in after the cover and starts to whip Rocky with the Russian chain. Then Magnum runs in, and, well, he ends up hanging Nikita over the top rope by that very chain. This all set up the Rocky/Magnum V Russians tag matches they worked around the horn.

TULLY BLANCHARD/ARN ANDERSON V ITALIAN STALLION/NELSON ROYAL: The best stuff in this match is early on -- the exchanges between two-fisted fireplug Royal and the stooging AA epitomize the ethos of the Crockett competitive squash. Less notable is the rest of the match -- the Stallion is a world-class spaghetti eater, but his offense here was listless and his selling less than compelling. The finish, the double gourdbuster, is a thing of beauty, usually; but here Tully and Arn could barely get that big tub of guts up for it.

DUSTY RHODES/NIKITA KOLOFF V THUNDERFOOT 1/THUNDERFOOT 2: The Thunderfeet have some great heel double-teams, of the sort Disorderly Conduct used to use. They get to do a little bit of that here in this otherwise by-numbers Superpowers squash.

IVAN KOLOFF/MANNY FERNANDEZ V KENDALL WINDHAM/ITALIAN STALLION: Stallion is less useless here than in the previous match; though no great shakes, his selling was tolerable.

Windham got to throw his Sam Houston Special dropkick, which was nice. The real highlight here, though, is the doubleteam stuff Ivan and Bull pull off. Seemed to be just filling time here.

JIMMY VALIANT/LAZERTRON V MOD SQUAD: Before this bunkhouse match, Boogie made the circuit of the ringside seats, trying to find some hands to slap and some babies to kiss. Not many takers -- a lot of folks sitting with their arms folded like the Def Beat Cru in the "Me Myself and I" video. Boogie was at the end of his Crockett run, and people were sick of the shtick. So Boogie took that energy and channelled it as a professional would, and had perhaps the most essential bunkhouse tag match of his entire career. No shucking. No jiving. No playing to the crowd. Boogie was like a man possessed out there in that squared circle. So much violence. He had seen his friends disappear, had Boogie. Pistol Pez souled Boogie out, as did a chorus line of glass-bottomed beauties, and even Buzz Tyler and Nighthawk Coltrane after that disastrous weekend in Provincetown. But here, Boogie said fuck the haters. Here, Boogie said, 'fuck you Nighthawk and your pussy-ass David Mamet affectations'. He channeled the hate into the very skulls and souls of Mosh and Banger, or whatever the Mod Squad's names were. Boogie was, like, feeling the bunkhouse groove. If only you could see this match, you'd understand that. And even though the MOD Squad won, it was Boogie who was the hero -- of match quality. Lazertron did not dress bunkhouse stylee, by the way

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A teasing glance has pushed me out,
Now is that, is that
SINGLES 45s And UNDER
The tougher tougher tougher it gets
The more my lips frequent
Now that is love.
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Kanemaru/ SUWA vs KENTA/ Tsuyoshi Kikuchi- NOAH- 11/18/2005- [RASMUSSEN]: SUWA vs Kikuchi is the feud I have been waiting my lifetime for. It could not possibly deliver on earth like it does in my mind. Considering that the feud aspect made the second SUWA vs KENTA match my match of the year- all because of the old guy standing at ringside. My expectations can't help but be crushed when it all finally arrives on my TV set. But it is Kikuchi and SUWA so you never know. SUWA and Kanemaru RULE as they assault Kikuchi before the bell and stomp the fuck out of your pretty boy KENTA. Kikuchi with the forearms to SUWA's head had better EXCITE you or you ARE NOT A PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING FAN. The Kikuchi headbutt is beautiful. SUWA and Kikuchi standing in the ring and beat the living dogshit out of each other is motherfucking GOLD. If you don't think so- FUCK YOU. Go watch rhythmic gymnastics. The GROWN FOLK are watching the Professional Wrestling. Go back to the basement. SUWA will take a kick directly to the face in the corner from KENTA and fire out of the corner to bull KENTA to the opposite corner for the tag and Kanemaru FEELS IT and beats the piss out of KENTA. If you don't want hate in your professional wrestling, have thought about fucking yourself? Really.

Kikuchi tags in and kicks the fuck out of Kanemaru to show SUWA that Kanemaru is his little bitch now and SUWA will be his little bitch soon. They fuck up a suplex and SUWA tags in and SUWA mauls Kikuchi and they both start strangling each other. SUWA does the completely dickish dropkick to the back of the head as Kikuchi is laying on the ground to lead up to Kikuchi getting his groin exploded by a SUWA toprope elbow and Kikuchi sells it like Curly spinning in a circle. SUWA drives KENTA into the rail to keep the hot tag from happening so Kikuchi's babyface comebacks are heroic but futile. Kikuchi is Godlike selling the Camel Clutch and Kanemaru is so the best Robert Gibson by mauling KENTA in the corner. SUWA with the straight rights and Kikuchi puts on a clinic on how to sell an assbeating as a babyface. Kanemaru is fucking Marabunta in selling the hot tag, leaning into KENTA's offense like a KING and then cheating like a complete bastard to make KENTA the babyface in peril. KENTA has a comeback and tags in an enraged Kikuchi and SUWA's ass is grass. The Spider Suplex into the Diving Headbutt before the save and then Kikuchi kills Kanemaru with a Screwdriver but leaves his back to SUWA who goes back on offense until KENTA runs in. Kanemaru and KENTA take it to the floor leaving SUWA and Kikuchi to preveiw their singles match and they do some suplexes and roll-ups- weirdly with SUWA getting the flash-like pin. Postmatch, SUWA gets on the stick and calls Kikuchi his little oiled-assed bitch. Kikuchi gets on the stick and says if he can't beat him in the Tokyo Coliseum or in the fucking parking lot, he'll hang up boots. SUWA IS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOUR BY GETTING IN THE MOST DICKISH SUCKER PUNCH AND RUNNING AWAY AS FAST AS HE CAN. The Professional Wrestling. THIS.

BAD NEWS ALLEN V DIAMOND TIMOTHY FLOWERS- 1994: Inside a steel cage, at the ass-end of Allen's career, Has Been Allen's gut like that of Headhunter C, I came into this not expecting much. Both guys cut promos before the match; Never-was Flowers plays for race heat, saying 'I'll kick your black ass'. Action begins outside the ring, with Allen throwing Flowers into the crowd, hitting fans and all that. Not as exciting as it sounds. They finally make it into the ring, and it is very slow. The best thing here is Allen's palm strike, which is world-class. Otherwise, just a tepid brawl between two doughy guys with suspect cardio and little interest in delivering an interesting match. Allen has a cheap heat manager also, who must be the promoter's brother or coke dealer, because he certainly has no talent as a second. [Emerson Lawson]

Buddy Rogers vs. Killer Kowalski - Chicago, most likely before the '68 Democratic Convention-[RAVEN MACK]: By the nuclear household standards of the time (the age of the Cleavers), Buddy Rogers slight swagger was disgusting, long before the dysfunctional age where wrestlers can simulate forcing oral sex on fallen opponents to the cheers of children (the age of the Bronco Busters). Wearing a World belt with the metal plate no bigger than one of today's championship rodeo belt buckles, and wearing it with cocksure confidence that alienated the everyday sad sacks in the steel chairs around the ring who still believed in that whole hard work will get you to financial heaven all-american mantra. Both guys get sorta booed though, as Kowalski was King Shithead for some time back then.

Commentator lays the back story of them having a match a year ago in Canada, where Kowalski broke Rogers' leg, and the promoter's been trying to put this one together ever since.

Rogers and Kowalski break from center ring to go to their corners for the bell, and Rogers turns and attacks the Killer from behind, to establish with the confused crowd who exactly is the more vile character involved. A woman actually shrieks in horror at this... she is a grandmother now, cooking meatballs in crock pots on Sunday afternoons for grandchildren whose favorite wrestler is Stacy Kiebler's ass.

I often wonder if the things we analyze as wrestling nerds watching this shit is on purpose or chance... are things laid out in operatic detail by the guys beforehand, or are they just really great freestylers who can ride the crowd's beat to perfection? Kowalski chases Rogers around after the initial attack, and Rogers ducks out the ropes in the corner, leaving only his left leg exposed, bent, so Kowalski lays in a couple of kicks as that's all he could reach. Chance, right? Well, the premise of the first fall basically continues from there to Kowalski beating the fuck out of that one knee/leg, which if you want to get super wrestling nerdish about, weakens the figure-four. Kowalski's sharp eastern European facial structure, locked into a angry grimace, is intense without all the self-awareness you usually with modern wrestling facials. Ahhh.... the commentator brings it all home, as this is the same leg broken last year in the Canadian match that doesn't need to exist somewhere for 1960-something us to believe it happened. Kowalski, of course, after pummeling the overly-confident champion's leg, wraps him up for the first fall victory. "In 4 minutes, 20 seconds..." says the ring announcer, which means the next few times I'm getting smoked out by some kid who thinks dreadlocks mean I love everybody and think the CIA killed Bob Marley, I'm gonna refer to weed as the Killer Kowalski.

Yeah, it's '63 says the commentator, and Rogers stalls off further attacks to start the second fall, to grab some hair and start doing the chinlock/chokehold bit. Motherfuckin' beautiful... Kowalski gives Rogers a clubbing to the head off the ropes and goes for the pin, but Rogers throws the left leg over the ropes in his dazed state, so Kowalski thinks he's won, but ref explains it, and once it sinks in he goes right to kicking that left leg again that's still draped over the bottom rope. I can sit here and analyze that shit like a graduate creative writing poetry student teaching an undergrad class on William Blake, but what's more important is that this was done and nobody noticed consciously. There was the leg again, and Kowalski was on it, and folks got fired up for it, without really having to be cognizant of the whole process. Attention to subtle details, that's what takes a supposed art form from being a commodity to being unexplainable magic. You can explain to me how Toby Keith is today's torchbearer for the outlaw country mindset, but it's all so formulaic and obvious. Try to explain to me exactly why I can put on Redheaded Stranger any Sunday morning, hungover or not, and it'll sound perfect. You might be able to give it a good go, but it'd be a waste of time, because you can't explain magic. It just happens. But it doesn't just happen, because it's the attention to the myriad of subtle details like Buddy Rogers leaving his leg dangling on the rope to get kicked again that makes it magic. And explaining it all misses the whole fuckin' point. Rogers goes back to the chokehold/chinlock thing to escape his doom, and then brings the punching fury to steal the second fall.

Much like lucha libre, the first two falls went fast, and the third fall starts slower, with Rogers getting a chance to strut and tap his head as to how smart he is, and Kowalski getting a chance to look intensely focused as the champ shows his ass like the fool we want to believe he is.

But oh how have the times have changed. Kowalski misses a kneedrop from the top rope - HIGH RISK MANEUVER! - and Rogers capitalizes by piledriving him and getting the immediate pin. Going to the top rope was too much. Those ropes are there to protect the athletes from injury, not to be used as a launching board for more recklessly dangerous moves. Killer Kowalski is lucky he could ever wrestle again after that suicide dive.

JUDO AL HAYES V STEVE VEIDOR- 1975: World of Sport action from the MME board, which may have been reviewed already, but since I am on a Al Hayes kick figured I'd go ahead and do it again for 2006. The match is 1975 though. The announcer informs us, interestingly, that Hayes is a 'naturalised American' and 'has been away for four years', presumably learning judo or helping with the Watergate break-in or something. Round system in effect here. [R1]: a slow round, all in all, with Hayes showing himself reinvented as an aggressive and sneaky hairpulling/dirty-breaking heel; Veidor is a bland face who likes to do cartwheels. There was some chain wrestling, but not much workrate really. [[R2:]] Hayes throws some early potatoes that I like and the crowd doesn't, so much so that when he finds himself out of the ring, he takes a nice shove from a fat woman in the crowd. Most of this round is dedicated to cheap heat, as Hayes excels at it and Veidor is limited. Hayes is always working, jawing with the crowd or the ref, trying vainly to offset Veidor's toxic blandness, roughly akin to a mannequin in the young men's section of a Penney's, circa 1972. Limited action, with Hayes dominating, in the manner of a competitive squash. [[[R3]]] The Man They Called Veidor goes on offense with the most pedestrian standing side headlock ever. Hey, Steve, if you're reading this, you coulda worked the hold some. Hayes shows some interesting strikes here, but the pace is torpid in the manner of retirement home backgammon games. Veidor sells sort of like Lincoln Chafee, if Lincoln Chafee were a wrestler. We do get some color, if the censor-bubble they pop on-screen is any indication. [R4]]]] Between rounds, a punter hollers at Hayes: 'Go back to America'. Nice heat. Amazingly, Veidor makes a comeback here and wins via sunset-flip. Why? Well, according to the voiceover, 'Hayes is going back to the United States next week.' Word is that he flew with Bobby Heenan... on AIR WEASEL~! [Lee Marshall]

THE 2001 EAGLE PRO CRUISERWEIGHT TOURNAMENT- SUPER JUDIST/CRUSHER TAKAHASHI (CROWN) vs. HIROSHI SHIMADA/TAKAO IWASAKI (EAGLE)- PART VIII-[DEAN RASMUSSEN]: MEANWHILE:

Hiroshi climbs out of the Toyota 4Runner. "YO! TAKAO! Git the fuck out here, we gotta go!"

"Oh sorry, hoss. Laurie wouldn't get off the phone. She's still mad."

"Well you can stay here. I can go by myself, my sister is there..."

"Fuck that. Fuck her. Let's go."

They climb into the red 4Runner. "You seem to be more anti-Laurie than you usually are. What did she do this time?"

"I told her that we were going to the mountains and she lost her fucking mind." Hiroshi takes a giant shot from the bottle of Early Times and hands it to Takao.

"She needs some friends. Its only going to get worse. Not that it's any of my fucking business."

"No, fuck that, you're right. Its fucking annoying but then I feel bad because she knows she doesn't have any friends. If she had any life outside of time with me, she would lose her shit when I'm gone."

"Look, I'm not your fucking mom, but it's not healthy for her to depend on you for everything."

"I know that. But nobody is coming around with any answers, ya know. Fuck, it's like if I left her she would fucking kill herself."

"Yeah, but luckily she no longer brings the pussy."

"Alright, now you can shut the fuck up."

"I'm just trying to help. It's what these type of things develop into. Let me say one thing and then you can tell me to shut the fuck up."

"It's your whiskey. Go ahead."

"Soon. One day soon. You're gonna be fucking her and your gonna wonder if it's because she wants to or because she's afraid of losing you."

"Ain't no 'soon' about it. It's a motherfucking joy. I just want to fucking slap her when she makes that face that says 'I'm doing this FOR YOU.' God, I fucking want to kill something."

"Goddam. Do you know how fucking pathetic that is?"

"Yeah, fucker, I fucking live it. Shut the fuck up and drive."

"Fair enough. On a lighter note, I think you will be all about the Mountain Pussy. My sister's friends will be there and they are pretty fuckin choice."

"Choice."

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8 FISTS IN THE FACE OF WRESTLING, MOTHERFUCKER.
THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYAZ